



San Diego City Attorney **MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

NEWS RELEASE

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CITY ATTORNEY URGES MAYOR TO IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN TO CONSERVE WATER AND CALLS ON CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT CITY'S WATER REUSE STUDY

San Diego, CA—In anticipation of a looming water crisis affecting San Diego, City Attorney Michael Aguirre called upon Mayor Jerry Sanders to implement a mandatory water conservation program, prepare an emergency water ordinance, and implement a temporary development moratorium on future and proposed residential housing units of 500 or more.

“The Mayor should be exploring all possible options to ensure that San Diegans have a safe, secure and reliable water supply for their homes and businesses,” said City Attorney Aguirre. “Instead the Mayor is using public relations scare tactics in connection with a phantom toilet-to-tap recycling wastewater plan. Had the Mayor done his homework by reading the City’s 2006 Water Reuse Study, he would have known that toilet-to-tap systems are illegal in California.”

In a news briefing today the City Attorney noted that San Diegans are already drinking treated wastewater that is being imported from the Colorado River:

- a) Wastewater discharges equal 17.6% of the total river flow of the Colorado River before it enters the intake point from which the City of San Diego derives its drinking water.
- b) The Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, the other major source for San Diego drinking water, contain about 9.4% treated wastewater discharges.

The information is contained in the City’s 2006 Water Reuse Study, which examines different alternatives for using more recycled water. Aguirre is requesting that Council President Scott Peters place on the City Council agenda the City’s Water Reuse Study for adoption.

Also, a City Attorney memorandum released today to the Mayor and City Council explains that California law requires the City to file a certification that it has a projected 20-year water supply in connection with large developments. The City has not done so. In addition a recent federal court ruling severely reducing

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the availability of water from the Sacramento River casts serious doubt on San Diego's ability to meet its long-term needs. Therefore, Aguirre is recommending that the City take steps to prevent a water supply shortfall by implementing a temporary development moratorium on all future or proposed residential development consisting of 500 or more dwelling units (excluding affordable housing projects).

"It is naïve to think that the City can continue to import 90% of our water," said City Attorney Aguirre. "The price of water will go through the roof as cities in Southern California compete against each other and bid for what little is left."

In that regard, the City Attorney is holding a Community Forum on Water Recycling on September 27th at City Hall. The forum will encourage San Diegans, including both private citizens and government decision-makers, to become vigorously engaged in this very important debate, understand the science, and make a decisions based on fact, not fear. The time to act is now, before the water crisis worsens. We need to consider all possible methods of recycling wastewater and not reject anything out-of-hand.

To view a copy of the 2006 City Water Reuse Study, visit www.sandiegocityattorney.org, click "NewsWatch."

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